



opi.mt.gov

Pryor OPI Team - Planning for Improvement November 9, 2010

Change is not consistent, but perpetual. It has its peaks and valleys. We are on a course of sustainable school improvement. Placing the needs of our students foremost as we endeavor to create supports needed for a successful school year, a successful education and a successful life.

School Board Involvement --- Stevie

Schmitz: This month has been spent primarily in policy review for the district. Thanks to the help of Mona, I have the current policies and am reviewing them in preparation for the model policy roll-out by MTSBA. The board has several Pryor-specific policies and has indicated that these have served the district well and that they should be incorporated into the new policies; so time was spent reviewing and identifying which policies are required, recommended, or unique to the Pryor District. We are ready for the Policy review/adoption portion of the District Action Plan.

Before the busyness of the holidays are upon us, it would be good to set aside needed time for board training or work sessions. Please refer to the possible subjects list that was presented earlier, set priority areas and coordinate possible dates. I am sure you are as excited as I am to improve the district policy manual and make the work of the board an easier and smoother task.

There has been one board meeting since my last report. Items of a routine nature for the season were dealt with by the board as well as a meeting with legal counsel to work on a litigation issue. Although neither administrator was able to attend, the board, assisted by the clerk, dealt with the items on the agenda including coach hires, rental issues, pending litigation, and other matters.

The MCEL Conference was held in Billings and many of the sectionals were informative for board policy and professional development. The clerk and three trustees were registered and I hope that they found it to be informative as well. A superintendent and board chair

breakfast was held on Friday morning and although the chair and superintendent were not able to attend, good information was shared with the SIG school personnel who were there.

Instruction News---Calli Rusche-Nicholson

Elementary: On October 19, 2010 four teachers attended the Corrective Reading training provided on-site by myself and the OPI Field Consultant, Courtney Peterson. Teachers were given background information on data-driven instruction and then trained on the components of Corrective Reading. There will be three classes of Corrective Reading for third through sixth grades. Teachers set an implementation deadline of November 8.

Middle and High School: The Algebraic Thinking coach, Roy Shelton, attended Plenty Coups High School on October 28 and 29 in order to assist both junior high and high school math teachers with program implementation. Mr. Shelton will also establish both teachers to have access to on-line coaching.

Teachers that attended MEA in Helena, October 21 and 22 were given additional information on the DJ Vanas, MASS Insight High Performing Readiness Model, Culturally Competent Instruction, and an introduction to state standards. The second day, HS/MS communication arts teachers received McDougal information from Frances Bessellieu and HS/MS math teachers practiced Algebraic Thinking components with Roy Shelton.

Next Steps: I will continue to model lessons, observe, begin preliminary work on curriculum alignment, and provide ongoing support of job-embedded professional development. Within the

Calli Rusche-Nicholson CNicholson@mt.gov,
Stevie Schmitz, SSchmitz@mt.gov,
David Stringfield, DStringfield@mt.gov,
Nancy Coleman, NColeman@mt.gov
Courtney Peterson, COPeterson@mt.gov
Sarah Pierce, SPierce2@mt.gov

Phone: 406-256-0460 Pryor Office
Phone: 406-690-4722 Evening Phone
Phone: 406-256-0460 Pryor Office
Phone: 406-444-3551
Phone: 406-281-5092
Phone: 406-444-0708

next two months, I will continue to assist with program implementation of Carnegie Math, Algebraic Thinking, Corrective Reading, McDougal-Littell, and Bridges by following program observation checklists for previously mentioned programs.

Transformation News--- *David Stringfield:*

Pryor staff and administration have already started working on some of the tasks written into the District Action Plan. Feedback on the District Action Plan will be received from the OPI soon. Teachers meet regularly to improve implementation of new programs.

Administrators meet weekly to monitor implementation of action plans and to discuss staff and student instructional needs.

This month school improvement team focused on and is considering ideas for improved community involvement. Plans to begin an afterschool program are temporarily delayed, allowing for more research into available grant monies, and to collect staff and student feedback. Savannah Sinquah and Don Wetzel are helping to prepare the ground work for improved community involvement. The board will have the opportunity to review the improvement team's recommended schedule for an early release professional development. The early releases will create collaborative time for school improvement efforts. The next school improvement team meeting is Nov. 30th.

School Climate – With support from an MBI Coach, universal student expectations have been adopted: Be Responsible - Be Respectful - Be Safe - Be a Learner. Staff will develop activities to help students learn these expectations. Principals Walker and Stands keep track of student discipline and record monthly discipline referrals. They are exploring positive behavior supports that can be provided to students who are referred to their offices for disciplinary reasons.

Student and Staff Attendance – We are focusing on recording accurate student attendance and tardy rates and following adopted procedures to decrease absences. An accurate student attendance record, maintained by our elementary secretary, indicates elementary attendance rate of 91%. Powerschool use is inconsistent in the MS/HS. However, the attendance committee mailed attendance warnings to families of 15 students in the high school, each of these students having five or more absences in any given period. Efforts are being made to resolve the computer system problems related to accurate Powerschool use. The staff attendance rate for October was 95%, which provides an excellent model for Pryor students.

From the Helena Office -- *Nancy Coleman, SIG Unit Director:*

District Action Plan- (DAP) Reviews of those plans are being done on Friday, October 29, 2010. Feedback on the plans will be distributed to the Transformational Leaders and Superintendents when that work is completed. That feedback then will be shared with the SIG Team.

School of Promise Performance Appraisal System – (SOPPAS) There will be orientation for staff on this evaluation system soon. We will keep you posted on the upcoming dates and we would invite interested board members to attend that orientation session.

Labor/Management Team –This group was established as part of the MOU that was put into place to help handle any collective bargaining issues. As soon as the 3rd Party Evaluators have been identified and trained your team will need to meet to recommend a contract, which is part of the SOPPAS process, to the board either at the December or January board meeting.

SIG Field Consultant News -- Courtney Peterson:

I have provided ongoing support for the work of Calli Nicholson and David Stringfield in Pryor.

October 7 – 19 I was onsite four dates during this time period. Topics handled during these days include direct support and training to elementary teachers, observations in the high school, and meeting with the high school principal.

October 21 – 22 Attend MEA-MFT days in Helena, facilitated Communications Arts strand.

School Advocate News – Sarah Pierce:

While working to provide the job embedded professional development I have arranged with several providers to assist teachers with specific needs in their classroom. I am also working with other coordinators to support the school in regards to Professional Learning Communities, Special Education requirements, and National Board Certification. I am currently building communication ties between all four schools to help facilitate teacher development and support. Within that initiative I am developing several social media groups, discussion boards, a website and alerting media to events that are highlighting the achievements at our Schools of Promise.